THE IMPERIAL NEWS SERVICE

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A Magazine Devoted To The Original Traveller Science Fiction Game.

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March / April / May

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Submissions: We are looking for good articles and illustrations for T.I.N.S. When submitting manuscripts and artwork enclose a stamped and self-addressed envelope with appropriate postage for return.
Help: We are also actively looking for Associate Editors and an Art Director. The pay is small but the credit and enjoyment is big!

THE TRAVELLERS EDITOR

Issue 1, March / April / May 1993

This is of course our first issue of THE IMPERIAL NEWS SERVICE which will frequently be abbreviated to T.I.N.S. for quick reference. My hope is that many of our Traveller fans will be brought back together with the conception of this magazine, much like we were in the 1980's when Traveller items flowed from many different companies.

I would also like to make it clear from the start we will not accept or publish anything written for MegaTraveller or Traveller (The New Era). This magazine is devoted entirely to Original Traveller as it was printed in Traveller Books 0-8, Starter Edition, Deluxe Edition and The Traveller Hardback Book.

In the future we intend to publish modules, supplements, science-fiction stories, a comic and many different items that will appeal to the dedicated Original Traveller Referee. If any of you readers have additional idea's, please feel free to send them my way, because we can always use the help.

As an added bonus Star Quest Games (our parent company) is now offering a six part Original Traveller Referee Screen for $2.50 plus $1.50 for postage and handling. This new Referee Screen offers many new weapons and other features that the Judges Guild Screen didn't.

Read this issue and enjoy for we hope many more will follow with your subscriptions and submissions. Drop us a letter and tell us what you think, good or bad.

- James L. Shipman
Editor

PLAYER QUOTE: I SHOT HIM AND HE FELL, I SHOT HIM AGAIN, AGAIN, AND AGAIN AND HE DIED.

PRIOR ENLISTMENT SKILLS FOR TRAVELLER

By Warren Okuma

Not to long ago it occurred to me that starting characters in **Traveller** were 18 years old and had absolutely no skills. What ever happened to computer whiz kids? How about members of the rifle team and the R.O.T.C. They could at least be expected to have Rifle -1. Just imagine a war-torn country (or planet) with few adults left alive; such a country might send twelve-year-old kids into battle. How many skills would kids growing up in this country have upon reaching 18 years old. This article offers some guidelines for creating characters 18 years old and younger and generating appropriate skills for them.

Building A Character

First players must decide how old their characters are. Younger characters will have lower starting characteristics than standard Traveller characters. Use the following chart to determine how many dice to roll for your character's basic characteristics:

17-18 years old:	2d6
15-16 years old:	2d6-1
14 years old:	1d6+2

Any character under 14 years old should begin with further reductions in Strength, Dexterity, Endurance, and Education.

Skills

The standard enlistment procedures don't work very well for the under-19 crowd. Younger characters should select skills using a different system. To find out how many skills you can take, use this formula:

(Education + Intelligence) / 4 = Skill Points.

Any fraction of .5 or more can be used to buy an extra skill at level 0. (The character gets no plus or minus when using that skill.)

EXAMPLE: Mickey is a youngster with an IQ of 6 and an Education of 7. This gives him (6+7) / 4 skill points - a total of 3.25. Rounded down, this means he will be able to select 3 skills. (If his IQ had been 7, his skill point total would have been 3.5 - (7+7) / 4. Had this been the case, he would have been able to select three skills plus one at level 0.)

In determining which skills young characters have, use the Skill Tables provided with this article. Characters roll on the skill table a number of times equal to their starting skill point total. The basic skill categories are Personal Development, Street Skills, School Skills, Rural Skills, Special Interests, and War Zone Skills. Feel Free to change these categories (and the specific skills with them) to fit the needs of your campaign and your players. Remember that only characters who have grown up in a war zone may select war zone skills. Remember also that growing up in a war zone has an adverse effect on material and cash benefit rolls.

SKILL SELECTION EXAMPLE: Mickey has three skill rolls and chooses to roll twice on the Special Interests Table and once on the Rural Skills Table. His rolls are a 3, a 6 and a 2, giving him Mechanical, Gambling, and Bow Combat.

In addition to the unique skill tables, younger characters should use the Cash and Material Benefits chart included with this article. Characters between the ages of 16 and 18 roll twice on this table; all other characters roll once. Players are free to choose which chart they roll on.

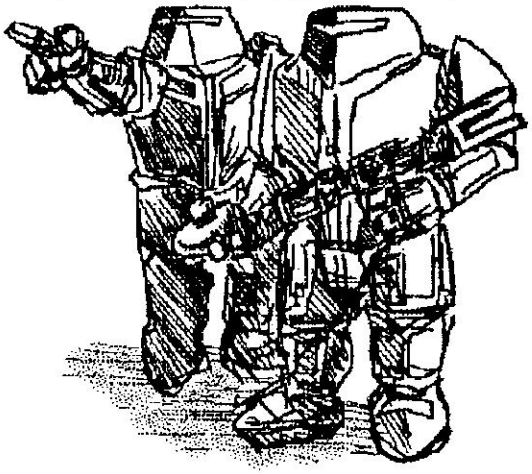
This character generation system allows characters to make use of their education characteristic; it can be used to give an upset 1-term character a few extra skills; or it can be used to put together a team of precocious kid commandos. Most characters generated using this system are exceptional and should be played as such.

The system suggests several interesting scenario ideas: Let's say a 14 year old kid runs away from home; he's a nasty kid who packs a shotgun. A bunch of kids his own age would be able to go a lot more places than this kid is likely to go - without attracting a lot of attention - than a crew of 45 year old cutthroats. How about the problems encountered by younger characters? Where would they find a patron? (Probably not in a bar... at least not without getting into some trouble.) Sometimes just getting a job can be an adventure in itself.

Running an adventure with an all under 19 gang can be a real challenge, but with the application of a little imagination, you can have all sorts of fun with gifted under age commandos.

BENEFITS

	CASH ALLOWANCES	MATERIAL BENEFITS
1 or less	20 cr	Blade
2	50 cr	+1 Dex
3	100 cr	Gun
4	250 cr	Cloth Armor
5	500 cr	Ground Car
6	1000 cr	Low Passage
7	2000 cr	Medium Passage
8	3000 cr	High Passage



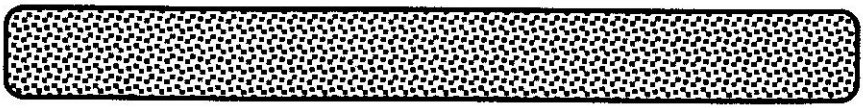
SKILL SELECTION

PER. DEVELOPMENT		STREET SKILLS	
1 or less	+1 Str	1 or less	Brawling
2	+1 Dex	2	Forgery
3	+1 End	3	Blade Combat
4	+1 Soc	4	Gambling
5	+1 Int	5	Streetwise
6	+1 Edu	6	Jack-of-all-Trades

SCHOOL SKILLS		RURAL SKILLS	
1 or less	+1 Soc	1 or less	Hunting
2	Admin.	2	Bow Combat
3	Liaison	3	Recon
4	Mechanical	4	Blade Combat
5	Electronics	5	Survival
6	Computer	6	Vehicle

SPECIAL INTERESTS		WAR ZONE SKILLS	
1 or less	Gun Comb.	1 or less	Leader
2	+1 Edu	2	Vacc Suit
3	Mechanical	3	Forward Observer
4	Vehicle	4	Streetwise
5	Computer	5	Heavy Weapons
6	Gambling	6	Gun Combat

Have fun with this. Ω



CONVENTION BILLBOARD

GAMEFEST '93, MARCH 19-21
This convention will be held at Friend's Hobby Shop in Waukegan, Illinois. Events include miniatures, role-playing, and board games. Write to: Friend's Hobby Shop, 1411 Washington, Waukegan, IL 60085; or call 1-708-336-0709.

SF3SIG OPEN GAMING '93, MARCH 27-28
This convention will be held at Rockford College in Rockford, Illinois. Events include open gaming and Ten Backwards. Registration: $2/day. Write to: SF3SIG, College Box 237, Rockford College, 5050 E. State St., Rockford IL 61108.

SPRING OFFENSIVE IV, APRIL 2-4
This convention will be held at Illinois Central College in East Peoria, Illinois. Events include role-playing, miniatures, and board games. Registration: $3/day or $5/weekend. Event fees are $1 each. Write to: SPRING OFFENSIVE, The Game Room, 116 Walnut, Washington Illinois 61108 or call 1-309-444-4640.

THE GOOD GUYS BY JD

BAD NEWS, PRINCESS, WE'RE TRAPPED INSIDE A STAR DESTROYER..."FLUKE" WE....
HUNK!... I LOVE YOU!
NO YOU DON'T
TAKE ME.' I'M YOURS!
NOW CUT THAT OUT!
BUT I DO LOVE YOU!...
ENOUGH ALREADY ! "FLUKE" FOLLOW ME!
I WANT YOU!..
LEGGO, WE'VE GOT TO FIGHT OUR WAY OUT!
CHARGE!!
FOR GLORY AND..., UH.
SOOP!
WAIT FLUKE! NEW PLAN!
WAIT!
..HISS...
GIVE UP!!..
JDW
OKAY MAC, SURE, I'M A REBLE, BUT I'LL NEVER ADMIT IT, AND YOU CAN'T MAKE ME....
CHOKE!!
I SAID CHOKE!!!
HEY BUDDY! DIDN'T ANY-BODY TELL YA, IT AIN'T POLITE TO POINT!...
TWAK
BESIDES...
YOU,.. FAILED ME...

TO BE CONTINUED... YAAHG!

PISTOLS FOR TRAVELLER

By Paul Montgomery Crabaugh

The handgun has been long neglected in Traveller unlike its real-life counterpart in the here-and-now. The original rules provided those weapons that already exit - the body pistol, revolver and automatic pistol. Mercenary (Book 4) added just one - the snub pistol, a short-barreled ship's weapon. Finally, under pressure from the fans, GDW consented to add the laser pistol in Double Adventure 2 - Mission On Mithril.

There the matter remained. The wide variety of rifles added in Book 4 have never acquired a short-barreled accompaniment. Why, I don't know. A strong hunch is that law levels are rarely enforced, so players used to dungeon-crawling rather than civilized behavior have no reason not to stroll around residential areas looking like refugees from Pancho Villa's Space Army, bristling with rifles, RAM grenade launchers and what-not. Personally, I prefer the innocuous, easily-concealed pistol for forays into the unknown territory, a preference that led to the design of the following three hand weapons for others of similar inclination: the machine pistol, the gauss pistol, and the (admittedly not very inconspicuous) plasma pistol.

The machine pistol is a heavy, rapid-fire pistol using 9mm bullets, which are not interchangeable with other weapons. Ammunition is contained in a 20 round clip inserted under the barrel, and is fired in 4-round bursts (there is no single-shot setting possible). Reloading takes one round, during which the user should be treated as if evading. The machine pistol is available at tech level 6, and is outlawed at law level 3. Length: 200mm; Weight: 1100 gm (1 clip = 400 grams); Base price: 500 cr (1 clip: 20 cr).

The gauss pistol, as one might expect, is the ultimate development of the slug-throwing pistol. It is available at tech level 13 and is outlawed at law level 4. It fires gauss rifle ammunition, although at a lower velocity (1200m/s). A standard 40-round gauss rifle clip is inserted under the barrel, in front of the trigger guard. As with its larger cousin, the gauss pistol may be fired in bursts of 4 to 10, as well as single-shot. Length: 150mm; Weight: 500gm (1 clip = 400gm); Cost: 1000 cr (1 clip: 30 cr). Note that the high relative weight of the clip is due to the inclusion of the power pack for the pistol (or rifle) in the clip itself.

COMBAT MATRICES

ARMOR MODIFIERS

WEAPON	NONE	JACK	MESH	CLOTH	REF	ABLAT	BATTLE
Machine Pistol	+2	+2	0	-1	+2	0	-3
Gauss Pistol	+3/+6	+3/+6	+1/+4	0/+2	+3/+6	+3/+6	-3/-1
Plasma Pistol	+3	+3	+3	+3	+3	+3	0

RANGE MODIFIERS

WEAPON	CLOSE	SHORT	MEDIUM	LONG	EXTREME	DAMAGE
Machine Pistol	-2	+4	-1	-3	no	3D
Gauss Pistol	0/0	+2/+2	+1/+3	0/+2	-3/-1	4D
Plasma Pistol	no	0	+2	+1	0	8D

OTHER MODIFIERS

WEAPON	MIN DEX	PENALTY	ADV DEX	BONUS
Machine Pistol	8	-2	11	+1
Gauss Pistol	8	-2	11	+2
Plasma Pistol	9	-3	12	+1

AMMO	WEAPON	EFFECTIVE (8+)	LONG RANGE	EXTREME (12+)
20 (4)	Machine P.	10 (1) +2	20 (0) +1	40 (0) +0
40 (4)	Gauss P.	60 (4) +2	120 (2) +1	200 (1) +0
	Plasma P.	100 (8)	200 (6)	———
	Laser P.	60 (5)	120 (3)	200 (1)

The plasma pistol-15 (or PP-15) is the most powerful single-hand weapon available in the Imperium; although outlawed at level 1, it finds considerable popularity among Imperial ground force officers - as well as, of course, elements of the population outlawed anyway. The PP-15 is built around a PGMP-14 power pack

massing 1600mm (90gm when turned on) and costs 250,000 cr (50 cr to recharge). The projector has no grav. modules to reduce its weight (or its recoil; the pistol may only be fired every other turn, as with the PGMP-12). It is 250mm long and masses 1100gm. The cost of the pistol, with the special adapting cable to the power pack is 200,000 cr; note that the pack must be bought separately. Maximum range is 800m. As the name indicates, the PP-15 is available only at tech level 15.

And last but not least, for those of you who now routinely use the Azhanti High Lightning system for resolving Traveller combat, the AHL weapon table factors for all three pistols as well as the laser pistol from Mission On Mithril.

PAWN OF THE FIRE WEB

By K. L. Jones

A science-fiction story of adventure.

The blue-green fire seemed to be dancing mere centimeters from the lenses of the view screen. He knew that the force field was holding and that the fire was at least ten meters from the hull. The instruments told him that. The instruments also told him the ship was caught fast in the power interplay created by the web and the ship's force field. The Rodgan cruiser which had cast the web was out there somewhere. As long as it held the web on his ship he was stuck.

He pressed his tongue against the first molar on the left side of his jaw, activating the psi-link with the ship's computer.

"Suggestions," he sub-vocalized.

"Can you clarify?" The response was instantaneous.

"I'm asking for suggestions as to how we can get out of this mess."

There was a pause this time. Then: "I'm a computer, not a magician."

"I continue to be surprised by your sarcasm," he snapped back. "I didn't know that was included in your programing. Just tell me what you would do if you were me."

Again there was a slight pause before the computer responded.

"If I were you... I'd take a break... Try and relax... Our force field will hold indefinitely... Their web will last even longer... Nothing will be decided in the immediate time frame... And you boi-readouts indicate you need a break... As for the sarcasm, I'm self-taught."

He pressed his tongue against the left side of his mouth, cutting the link. Spinning in his command chair, he turned his back on the view screen and forcefully propelled himself from the chair. The gravity of the ship somewhat less than he had expected, he almost toppled over before regaining his balance.

Momentarily he thought of activating the link to order coffee but before he did so he noticed the steaming cup sitting under the outlet in the mess area.

"Thanks," he spoke aloud, knowing that the computer's audio sensors would pick up the message.

Sitting with his back to the view screen he sipped at the coffee and tried in vain to block out the situation he was in. It was easy for him to feel at home here. The ship, the Doubting Thomas, was his home and had been for the last seven years. It had been a good home. It was everything he wanted.

After leaving the service where he had received his space flight training, all he had wanted was to run his own ferry service. Cargo or people. It hadn't mattered.

But then the war...

Who ever understands the reason for war? A conflict of interests. A dispute of minor significance elevated to a blood bath. None of it really mattered, except that he, Richard Winston Cramer, was a reserve officer.

When he was called up, he was given an option. Line duty on a fleet cruiser, or the messenger service. He chose the later because he would be allowed to keep the Doubting Thomas and would avoid most of the hassles of regular military duty.

Then this mission. All he had to do was ferry some new weapon plans along with several working models to the Jadini System. The only catch was that the flight plan would require three jumps, two of which would bring him into areas patrolled by the Rodgans. The admiralty had informed him that the odds of completing the mission were heavily in his favor.

When the same date had been fed into the Thomas, he had gotten one word in response:

Sucker.

Cramer smiled bitterly at the memory as he sipped his coffee.

So here he was with his ship, twenty light years away from the nearest friendly forces, caught in the power of a Rodgan cruiser.

The cargo he carried was, he had been told, significant enough to possibly make the difference in the war. Prudence would dictate surrender. But Cramer, had he been prudent, would never have desired the life of a space pilot.

He pressed his tongue against the molar.

"Give me all the available data on the Rodgan web."

First figures then facts began to fill his mind. He wasn't interested in theory and probably wouldn't understand too much of it anyway. What he wanted and what he quickly picked up was the actual working nature of the web.

It was the one real advantage that the Rodgans had. No one was sure how the field was generated, but it did take a lot of energy. The web itself had no power unless it was opposed by a force field. The interplay of the two fields created a time-space anomaly which resulted in a pseudo-gravitational web uniting the two ships. It was impossible to penetrate a Rodgan web with any known weapon.

"In short," Cramer spoke aloud again, "we're stuck here until they let us go. Or our force field collapses, at which point they turn of their web and hit us with lasers."

"In sum, correct," said a speaker.

"Will our field outlast their web?"

"I have no access to their energy reserve monitor... However, since the cruiser is at least ten times our size, designed to engage in fleet battles and apparently his simply been on patrol, I would assume that they can keep the web on us until, if you'll pardon the expression, our reactors freeze up."

"Surrender. That is the only option that provides any acceptable chance of survival."

"How did you ever get so pessimistic?"

"Experience. If you want I will give you various tactics that have been employed by scout ships in similar situations. However, the tactics were all unsuccessful..."

"Never mind. What's the state of our armaments?"

"We have four missiles, none of which would be able to get through our force field. We have the laser, which is equally inoperable at this time..."

"If we deactivate the force field, can we use our laser against the Rodgans?"

"Yes... But we have no way of knowing where they are. By the time we target them, they will have scattered our particles..."

"You have such a knack for description."

Cramer moved from his position in the control chair. The green fire continued to dance in front of him on the view screen.

"If we turn our force field off, what happens to the web?"

"It collapses. Passes through us. Engulfs us. No one knows for sure... but the web itself cannot damage us..."

"Ok. On the count of three, deactivate the force field, launch the missiles at maximum spread. Take evasive action for ten seconds, then resume former course and then reactivate the force field."

Computers can't sigh, but Cramer thought that was the response his orders got.

He fastened the webbing which bound him to the chair. Stretched his arms out before him and then brought his hands down lightly on the control panel. There was no response to the pressure, and he knew that once the command was executed, the ship would, to the extent it was capable of movement, be fully automated. Still, he wanted the feel of those instruments at the tips of his fingers.

"One, two, three..."

The fire leaped at him, seeming to spring through the view screen. Even as the fire approached, the ride began. Gravity shifted, pulling him forward and to the right. Then back and still to the right. He was upside down for a second or two and then, just as he was righted, he slammed into a brick wall.

The green fire was gone. It had left a residue, an after image seemingly burned into the backs of his eye lids, but it was gone. He shook his head, trying to clear the image.

The fire was back. It was no longer just a ghost image. It was there before him on the view screen.

"Report," he said.

"Missiles launched. Results uncertain. We were out of the web for... three minutes nineteen seconds."

"Did you get a fix on the Rodgans?"

"Yes... and no. I have no reliable knowledge of where they are now. We are, as I'm sure you know, back in the web."

"I know."

Cramer leaned back in the control chair. A damp trickle flowed into his mouth and he was surprised to find, when he ran his hand across his face, that it was blood. Even before he could speak, the computer responded.

"You have suffered a nosebleed... Several vessels in your proboscis have ruptured... If you will tilt your head backward, the bleeding should stop presently."

Cramer did so.

"Trapped," he said out loud. "And it had to be with a comic."

There was no response.

Time passes slowly when you are caught and held. Maybe time doesn't pass at all...

Cramer moved from the command chair and started pacing the small cubicle that served as bridge, mess area and cabin. He activated the link and asked for a readout on the tactics that had failed against the web. He spent some time, maybe minutes, maybe hours, reviewing the data. Then he asked:

"Which one of these should have worked?"

"The one that seemed to have the best chance was the one involving random fluctuations of the force field."

A scout ship held in the web had tried to escape by randomly tuning its force field on and off while firing at the Rodgan cruiser that held it. The scout had even managed to inflict two hits on the cruiser before it was blasted apart by the return fire.

"Why didn't it work?"

"Three major reasons... One; the random pattern relied upon was the creation of the scout's computer... It was not completely random and was picked up by the enemy... Two; the scout tried to fight rather than run..."

"What's the third reason?" Cramer barked mentally when the computer failed to continue.

"Lack of any real knowledge about how the web field works..."

"Thanks a lot," Cramer said aloud.

Cramer began to pace the small area that was home. More of a home than any place had ever been. It was a home he didn't want to give up, especially not to the Rodgans.

"We're going to do it," he said in a hoarse whisper.

"Do what?" the computer's audio speakers sounding very distant.

Cramer activated the link and fed the plan into the Thomas then asked: "Will it work?"

"Probably... not."

"What's wrong with the plan?"

"The basic lack of knowledge of the web makes any plan questionable."

"So it might work?"

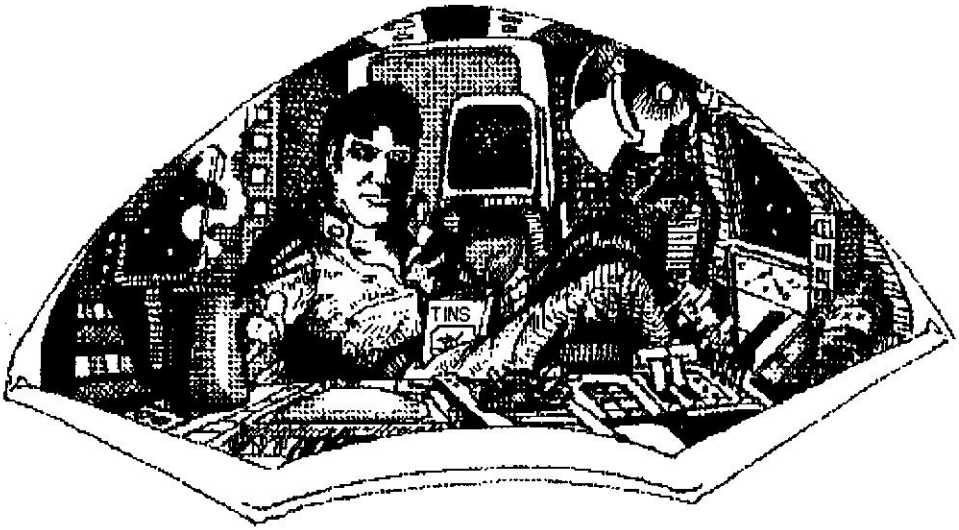
"It has as much chance as anything else... Except surrender... That would work."

"Give me the odds."

"Ten out of a hundred... One out of ten... With a potential error of twenty to twenty-five percent."

"Sounds good enough for me."

"You do realize that your plan is based on the assumption that the Rodgan wish to capture rather than destroy us?"



"Yes," said Cramer. If they just wanted to wipe us out they wouldn't bother playing with us."

"Have you ever seen a cat with a mouse..."

"Deactivate the force field," Cramer spoke the command.

He avoided the view screen for the seconds it took the green fire to collapse and pass through the ship. Nevertheless the image burned itself into his retinas. Even before the after-image faded he gave the sub-vocal command to switch to the ship's emergency energy system.

"Report," he barked, strapping himself in the command chair.

"The cruiser is ten kilometers off... At 190/30 degrees... It is advancing toward us..."

Cramer punched the buttons that gave him a view of the cruiser. It seemed smaller than he had expected. As he watched, a shuttle craft separated from the cruiser.

"They're coming out. That must mean they know what we're carrying."

"Either that or they don't think we're worth a laser beam..."

"When..." Cramer hadn't finished sub-vocalizing his thought when the computer cut in.

"Thirty seconds to initial position."

Time passed. Seconds that seemed like hours.

Suddenly Cramer was pressed into his chair as the ship sprang to life, executing a hard turn at full acceleration.

Cramer pressed the button that sent the laser beam toward the approaching shuttle craft and was disappointed as it spattered harmlessly against the craft's armor.

The Thomas executed another turn; Cramer was pushed back into the chair as his ship reached full acceleration.

"Jump point in nineteen seconds..."

The ship's report was followed closely by the soundless explosion that shook the ship.

"Minor damage in cargo section... Force field back on. Fluctuating at my command..."

Cramer placed his fingers on the button that would allow him to override the computer's control of the force field. Only when his fingers pressed down would the field be activated. It deactivation would be controlled by the computer.

He pressed, then released, then pressed. For a short moment the green fire danced before him only to be replaced by the greyness of hyperspace.

Cramer, feeling the tenseness drained from his muscles, laughed aloud.

"That was easy enough."

"It worked... But only because the Rodgans had some interest in not destroying us..."

"Do you think they know what we are carrying?"

"We are clothed in all the secrecy that Fleet Command could muster... Therefore, it is given that the enemy knows more about what we are transporting than we do..."

"None of that matters," Cramer sub-vocalized. "We're the first craft to get away from the web."

"It worked... Perhaps because we put a ship between us and the web generator..."

"Well, it worked. The rest of this mission will be a piece of cake."

"No... We will have to emerge from hyperspace in the Quartro Section... That area is generally patrolled by the Rodgans... And since they know what we are carrying... Where we are going... They will be looking for us..."

"No sweat. We beat'em this time. We can do it again."

"Yes..." The Thomas responded. "Maybe."

Despite his years in space, and the countless number of times he had experienced the translation from hyperspace to normal space, Cramer was always disappointed. There was no pop. No dramatic manifestations. The grey of the view screens was replaced by the goldflecked black of the star field.

"Translation completed..." the Thomas reported. "We are... three thousand kilometers off course... Not bad."

Cramer scanned the instruments on the command console. All systems functioning.

"We're in good shape," Cramer spoke. "And no sign of the Rodgans."

"Wrong," the Thomas speaker sounded. "Full alert..."

The view screen in front of Cramer exploded into blue-green fire.

"Where are they?" Cramer said, activating the link.

"Based on the data... received before the web hit us... they are... almost everywhere... There were seven cruisers... emerging from hyperspace... Roughly in a semi-circle to our rear... This time they really have us... by the tail."

Cramer looked at the view screen. Again he had the illusion of the fire dancing immediately before his eyes. It was, this time, an almost solid wall of flame. And this time the instruments were fluctuating between nine and seven meters.

"Status report."

"We are caught..."

Cramer waited.

"Go on," he said finally, venting his impatience.

"Our status is... somewhat complicated... The web is much stronger... Data: current projection... capacitors will overload in... two standard hours... Other than that... everything's fine."

Despite himself, Cramer laughed.

"We're in great shape, huh. So what do we do?"

"Three alternatives... We surrender now... We wait two hours... Or we drop our force field... and using our laser... shoot it out with the Rodgans... We'd last about three seconds..."

"Right," Cramer said.

"Would you like more... coffee?"

Cramer switched off the computer link and moved to the mess area. Two hours. He might as well relax.

The coffee was bitter and there was no way to relax. He put down the cup and began to pace. "If we drop the screen, how long would it take to get a scan of what's out there?"

"Two seconds... Does it really matter..."

"No."

Cramer continued to pace. "I want to know ten minutes before the field gives out," he said.

There was no response.

The ship was quiet.

He sat down and reached for the coffee cup. It was halfway to his lips when the computer spoke:

"It appears my estimate was overly optimistic... by some five minutes... We now have a reserve... capable of maintaining the force field for seventeen minutes."

"Thanks," Cramer said.

He pressed his tongue against the molar, reactivating the link. He took a final sip of the coffee. As he put the cup down, he glanced at the view screen. The fire vanished.

"The web is gone..."

"I know. What happened?"

An explosion in the after section of the ship forced him to the table.

"We are under more conventional attack.. Twelve Rodgans... Others..."

Another explosion and Cramer moved toward the command chair.

"Keep the field up."

"Will not hold... Firepower too great..."

"Damage report," Cramer demanded.

"Port, starboard, and after cargo holds hit..."

Another shock rocked the Thomas.

"Forward, port, and all rear scanners damaged... Hull breached... Energy / fuel reserves... below critical... And I'm not doing too well myself..."

The view screen went blank even before Cramer had strapped himself in the command chair. The instruments before him were a maze of red lights.

"Craft approaching... Contact in two minutes..."

Prepare self destruct on my command."

"No."

"What?"

"We have no self-destruct capacity... It was removed prior to start of this mission..."

"You're kidding."

"Would I kid... about a thing like that..."

Then: "We will be boarded in... twenty seconds... Craft has breached port air-lock..."

Cramer looked wildly around the cabin. The regulations required all fleet officers to have a blaster. But where in blazes was it?

"Storage locker... under mess table."

Cramer moved to get the weapon.

"Thanks, Thomas."

"Ten seconds... before they force the cabin hatch... three minutes of power left... Bye."

The blaster was in his hand as Cramer turned toward the hatchway.

"Bye, Thomas," he sub-vocalized. "It's been nice..."

He hesitated as the hatch opened. He hesitated a millisecond longer at the sight of the first space-suited figure. He started to pull the trigger. He was too late.

He awoke with a splitting headache and in strangely familiar surroundings. His blurred vision cleared as the pain in his head settled into a dull throb.

An ensign on his collar stood at the foot of the bunk. Cramer pressed his tongue against the left side of his mouth.

"What's going on?"

No answer. Cramer felt himself encircled by nothingness. He was alone, cut off from the Doubting Thomas.

"What's going on?" This time he asked the question verbally.

"I'm not supposed to answer any questions," the ensign said. "No one is supposed to talk with you until after the debriefing."

"What about my ship?"

"The admiral wants to see you as soon as possible."

"You're a very lucky man, Cramer," Admiral Dearborn said.

The admiral sat behind a desk that seemed to be as large as the entire mess area of the Doubting Thomas. Cramer swayed slightly as he stood at attention. The pain in his head was gone but he was hoping for an invitation to sit down. It didn't come.

"Lucky that Fleet was able to pull your eggs out of the fire before the Rodgans hatched them."

Cramer forced himself to return the Admiral's smile.

"Sir, what about my ship..."

"Of course, on the other hand, you're not all that lucky. I mean if your mission had been a total success, you'd be a big hero. We had plans to give you the Fleet Cluster. Posthumously, of course. Doesn't do to have too many live heroes running around."

"Yes, sir," Cramer said. "I'm sorry we weren't able to get to Jadini."

"You'd be even sorrier if you had managed to get through," the Admiral said briskly. "You still don't understand, do you?"

The headache was beginning to return.

"You were bait. You were supposed to hold off that first Rodgan cruiser until the fleet arrived. We were going to capture it and get some first-hand knowledge about the web."

"What about my cargo?"

"Your cargo was a collection of junk. You were bait, but you got off the hook the first time. We followed you here and ran into half the Rodgan Fleet. We lost two cruisers and sustained damage to three others. But, like I said, you're a lucky man."

"What about my ship?" Cramer said. "Sir."

"Oh, yes, the DT, or whatever you call it. It sustained heavy damage but was salvageable."

"I haven't been able to raise it on my link..."

"That's because this is a security area on a Fleet ship and we are totally shielded."

"That's what he thinks... Sorry... Took me a while to figure out how to get through the jam."

The message was a little fuzzy but the static slowly dissolved.

"Now as I was saying, Cramer, you are a lucky man. You single-handedly messed up a Fleet staff project. You cost us two ships and if you hadn't been so damn slow with your blaster, you would have wiped out three Fleet staff NCO's sent to rescue you."

"You did everything right... in other words..."

"Never mind," Cramer mumbled.

"What was that?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Now I'm going to tell you why you're a lucky man. We have this courier mission..."

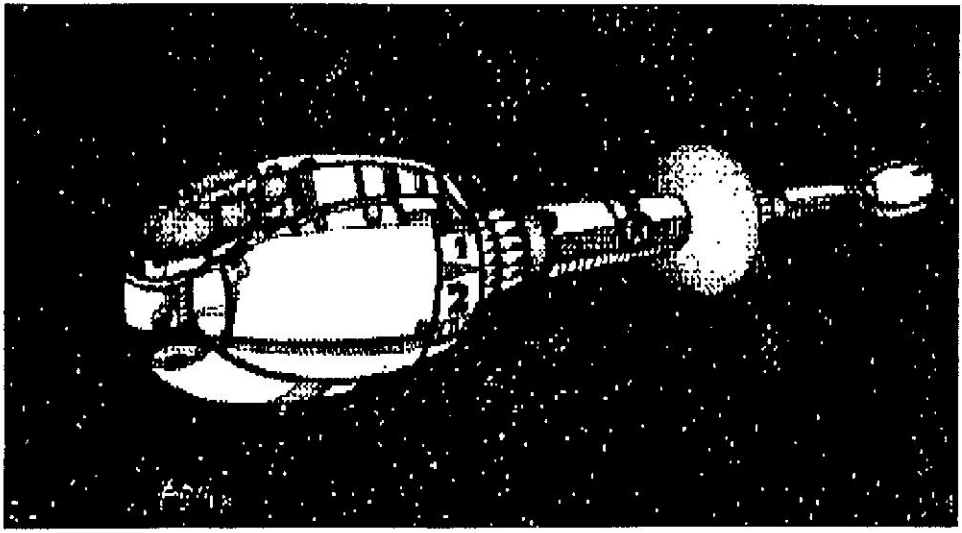
Cramer only half listened, knowing the details would be given at a more formal briefing, and would later be fed into the Thomas' data banks.

"You know what they did," Cramer sub-vocalized. "They used us like pawn. And we're getting the blame because the gambit didn't work."

"Not like pawns... There is always the chance... that a pawn can become a queen... We only had the chance of becoming so much... space junk."

"Are you listening to me, Cramer?"

"Yes, sir." Ω



(SPECIAL: Following this story you'll find the complete rundown of Fire Web, for use with ship's in Traveller.)

FIRE WEB

By K. L. Jones

A starship weapon for Traveller.

Obviously, the technology used at the time of this story is a little higher than that found in Traveller. During the Third Imperium, fire web generators were known mostly through infrequent discoveries in ancient hulks. The generators varies widely in design, but the admittedly incomplete knowledge available at that time might be summarized thusly:

CODE	TECH	TONS	EP
1	23?	1	3
2	17	50	10
3	17	100	20
4	18	75	20
5	17	200	30
6	18	150	30
7	23?	27	63
8	20?	197	92
9	19?	431	129

The discovered generators had that much in common - they had a measurable mass and consumed a measurable amount of energy. It was also possible to make a rough estimate of the technology level of the society which produced the generator. It goes without saying that discoveries of low-technology generators were more common (if that is the right word) than discoveries of high-technology generators. In fact, the numbers followed by question marks represent unique and perhaps unrelated artifacts discovered at separated points in a vast area of space over a period of hundreds of years.

Combat: A fire web can only be used at short range, at a single target which is using a continuous (nonflickering) black globe. The basic roll of 8+ is modified as follows: + web factor (code), - globe factor, - target agility rating, + relative computer size.

A successful hit will tie the ships together. Their vector will be the summed vectors of the two ship's motion. (Two ships of equal mass moving in opposite directions at equal speed would have a summed vector of zero.) If two (or more) ships web the same target, sum all three (or more) vectors. In practical terms, this means that the ships will remain at short range indefinitely.

A ship that makes a successful fire web attack can use its use its other weapons and sensors freely, but not in the direction of the target ship. It can maneuver freely, if it takes the extra mass of the target ship (moving with it) into account, but it cannot use its jump drive. The target ship, of course, cannot fire, use sensors, or maneuver, unless it turns off the force field. It has the consolation of being invulnerable to attack from any direction, an advantage not shared by the attacking ship.

A sufficiently powerful fire web (or combination of the same) may overload the target ship's capacitors. This, by itself, will do no damage, making the target vulnerable to other attacks. To calculate overload, subtract the defending screen factor from the sum of the attacking web factors. The result is the number of energy points absorbed per hour.

In the Campaign: Obviously, players will have little occasion to buy fire web generators, and less to install them on their ships. More often, the bad guys will play a fire web as a trump to the players using a black globe. Also, a generator might appear in a scenario as a mysterious, but incredibly valuable, alien artifact that the players find, steal, or are hired to guard. (It should take quite a while for them to figure out what the gizmo does!)

Incidentally, a fire web appears on very few universal ship profiles. When it does appear, the code is appended with the letter W. For example; of W4 appears after a USP, that means the ship mounts a code four fire web generator.

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By James L. Shipman

Published by GDW and listed by number and name.

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2	Adventure: Research Station Gamma
3	Adventure: Twilight's Peak
4	Adventure: Leviathan
5	Adventure: Trillion Credit Squadron
6	Adventure: Expedition To Zhodane
7	Adventure: Broadsword
8	Adventure: Prison Planet
9	Adventure: Nomads Of The World-Ocean
10	Adventure: Safari Ship
11	Adventure: Murder On Arcturus Station
12	Adventure: Secret Of The Ancients
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SKY RIG

By Paul Ormston & James L. Shipman

A Traveller adventure for 3-6 player characters. The Referee will need Books 1-5 (or the Starter Edition plus Books 4 and 5).

BACKGROUND

The players have, for some reason or other, found themselves on New World One (B063769-C), a man made space colony orbiting the system's only planet, a solitary gas giant called Skiddir. The colony itself is housed in a huge cylinder (48 miles long, 6 miles in diameter) which revolves along its axis to provide artificial gravity. Conditions inside are perfect for all kinds of human activity but recently this apparent paradise has undergone a revolution and then, a counter revolution. The present governors now feel that they cannot trust most of New World's inhabitants, so they have approached an 'off-world' party whose loyalty they can buy.

PLAYER'S INFORMATION

The party is approached by Gyron Chard (UPP 56898A), a representative of New World's government, who offers the players a mission. If the party are interested in what he has to say they will be led to a private room where they will be given details of their mission:

Within the clouds of Skiddir are several airborne gas refineries or sky-rigs as the locals call them, vital to the colony. The rigs provide fuel for all the colony's power plants, as well as for refueling visiting starships. Contact with a small experimental rig has been lost, and it is proposed that the party be sent to investigate.

The rig was working normally until five days ago, when the first outbreak of an unknown disease was reported by the rig's surgeon. Since then many of the crew have died. Then 21 hours ago, audio contact was lost, and just 3 hours ago the rig's powerful location / navigation beacon failed. The government, fearing another uprising, dare not announce this to the general public until it is sure of what has happened to the rig.

If the party accept this mission they will have but one hour to collect any personal equipment and arrive at the starport. This speed is necessary due to the worsening weather conditions on the planet below. Gryon tells them that a 30 ton cutter is waiting for them at the starport.

Cutter Profile (High Guard)

SY-0105501-20000-00000-0 MCr 19 TL 9 30 Tons

Crew = 2 Passengers = 8 Cargo = 6 Fuel = 2 Agility = 5

DATA ON THE GAS GIANT SKIDDIR

Skiddir has a diameter of 151,270 km (94,000 miles). The atmosphere is made up mainly of Hydrogen and Helium, but also contains higher than usual amounts of rare gases. All altitude readings are taken from the exact center point of the planet. Using this, the top of the atmosphere has an altitude of 75,635 km (47,000 miles); the cloud tops start at 69,200 km (43,000 miles), and the sky-rig the players are heading for floats at a height of 51,500 km (32,000 miles). The average wind speed at this altitude is 560 km (350 mph), rising to 1050 km (650 mph) during storm conditions. Skiddir's gravity at this height is 3g, and its atmospheric pressure is five times greater than Earth's. Skidder also emits a huge amount of radio noise, making normal communication links useless. To combat this, all ships that enter Skiddir's atmosphere are fitted with large arrays of communications / avionic equipment, but even these cannot pierce the extra interference caused by a storm.

REFEREE'S INFORMATION

The referee should give the players a copy of the rig's deck plans. Gyron Chard will have informed the characters about all the relevant security procedures, so they can gain access to any part of the rig. The players should also know the data about Skiddir, as well as the fact that a storm is heading rapidly towards the Sky-Rig.

THE JOURNEY TO THE SKY-RIG

The New World colony orbits Skidder at an altitude of 2,059,960 km (1,280,000 miles). It will take 8½ hours to reach the last known position of the Sky-Rig. During the flight roll twice for encounters on 2d6, 9+ an encounter has occurred. Roll 1d6 and consult the Encounter Table below.

ENCOUNTER TABLE

DIE ROLL ENCOUNTER

1 Turbulence. Pilot must roll 8+, DMs, +1 pilot skill to remain in control of Cutter (the ship); if the roll is failed then the ship is out of control, roll again each round until control is regained. For each round out of control roll 2d6. If a 12 is rolled some piece of the player's equipment has been broken.

2 Lightning Strike. The Cutter is undamaged, but one character takes 1d6+1 damage.

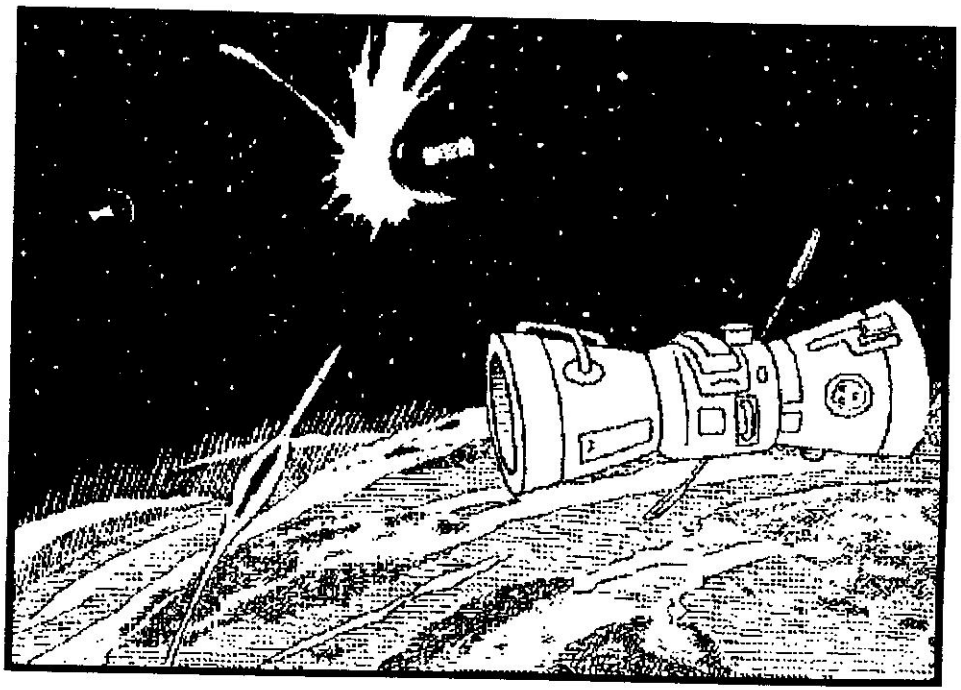
3 Confused Avionics. Static build up on the outer hull confuses navigation instruments. Roll 8+, DMs, +1 navigation skill to remain on course. If the roll is failed add 1d6+1 minutes to flight time.

4 Radar Contact. The players see a blip on the Cutter's radar that looks like another ship following them. It is in fact a false radar image, there is nothing there.

5 Personal Equipment Failure. Unknown to the players one piece of their equipment fails, due to age, lack of maintenance, etc.

6 Revolutionary Spy. A spy has hidden onboard the Cutter, if the players say they are searching the Cutter he will be found, otherwise he will remain hidden. If he is found he will not tell the players his true identity, but he will always try to prevent the players from succeeding with their mission. UPP 678A66, he carries a snub pistol. This can only happen once, if any are rolled again, count them as no encounter.

Once the players have reached the rig's last known position, they will find that it has drifted of station, 32 km (20 miles) 'downwind' and 4.5 km (2.7 miles) lower than it should be.



Once aboard the players will have access to three other sources of information, the rig's main computer, the Captain's Log and the Surgeon's Log. Information can be gained from the rig's computer at any terminal throughout the rig but it only contains a great deal of very technical data which would take days to analyze. The two logs can only be found in the Captain's cabin and in the Sick Bay; the players should know of the logs but not where they are kept. The Encounter Table and the Systems Failure Table give the events relating to the adventure. The referee should add other events to confuse and mislead the players. These can be about falling production figures, minor accidents or anything else the referee likes. The Surgeon's Log also contains a full description of the symptoms of the disease at the end.

ENCOUNTERS

The Energy Sucker. Deep within Skiddir's atmosphere live a multitude of strange unknown animals, of which the Energy Sucker is one. This particular individual lived off the occasional lightning strike, but entirely by chance, found its way into the upper reaches of the atmosphere, where it found an incredibly rich source of food, the Sky-Rig. As this creature approached it was sucked into one of the rig's gas intakes, causing all kinds of malfunctions in the rig's refinery which led to it being injected into an empty fuel tank where it lodged and started to feed.

The Energy Sucker lives off electrical energy, which it absorbs through a vast number of tentacles. This creature has caused all the deaths on the rig, and the players must find and kill it to save the Sky-Rig. It consists of three main parts. A large energy storage sac, a small body containing the brain and other organs and a vast mass of thin but extremely long feeding tentacles. These tentacles allows the passage of electricity along their length, but not through their sides, so all energy is absorbed at the very end of the tentacle.

ENERGY SUCKER	SIZE	ARMOR	HITS	WOUNDS & WEAPONS
Energy Sack	25 m	Cloth & Reflec	12/-	none
Body	3 m	Cloth	2/29	none
Tentacles	150 m	Cloth & Reflec	2/2	Electrical Discharge

For game purposes the number of tentacles is unlimited. The Energy Sucker can create an electrical discharge, a small lightning bolt projected from the end of a tentacle. Each tentacle can fire one lightning bolt each round; the bolt attacking as a laser rifle but only doing 1d6+1 damage. Reflec has no effect on this attack. It can also 'attack' via a by-product of the way the creature feed. The human body is controlled by tiny electrical impulses in the central nervous system. These impulses are vulnerable to being absorbed by this creature. This draining effect manifests itself as a form of disease. The symptoms of this disease are:

A feeling of tiredness, lasting for Endurance x 1 minutes, after which the patient falls into a deep sleep, lasting for Endurance z 1 minutes. The victim then goes into a coma which lasts for Endurance x 1d6 minutes, after which the victim dies.

Medical Slow drug will increase the survival time to three times that of normal (the players should not know this). The creature's tentacles do not have to touch their target, they absorb energy from everything within 3 meters of them.

Finding and Killing the Energy Sucker. The creature's tentacles have burnt their way through bulkheads following electric cables in between decks. Opening any inspection panel will reveal great bundles of tentacles. There are no parts of this creature in plain sight.

There are three main ways of killing the Energy Sucker. Shooting the Energy Sack, Shooting the body or giving the creature so much power so quickly

that the shock kills it. Shooting the body is quite a safe method but the body is a small target compared with the Energy Sack, which sprouts directly from it. Shooting the Energy Sac is very dangerous, as once it has taken 12 points of damage, all the energy stored in it will be released in one huge explosion. This explosion will do 1000 points of damage and have a blast radius of 15 meters. Being behind hard cover will reduce the damage by half, and if the blast fails to penetrate, the damage will be halved again. Treat the blast as a PGMP-12 for 'to hit' purposes. If a character is in an area completely sealed off by bulkheads from the explosion he will take no damage. There is also a one in six chance that the outer pressure hull will split. If it does split an instant increase in pressure will occur; throw under Endurance to remain conscious. This will be accompanied by a sudden increase in wind speed; unless the character is tied down or can duck through an airtight door they will be literally blown out the rig. The last method is to make an incision in the Energy Sack (2 points of damage will make a suitable hole) insert a steel cable and touch the other end to the side of the body or a group of tentacles. All its energy will be instantly released and the creature will be unable to cope with this massive influx of power and will die.

Spikeys. These animals come from the same region as the Energy Sucker, but are small and are not so dangerous!

ANIMAL TYPE	WEIGHT	HITS	ARMOR	WOUNDS	CODE
12 Flying Parasite	6 kg	8 / 8	Jack	2d6	A6F9S2

These animals are 60-70 cm across resembling huge snow flakes because of their crystalline structure. They attack by flying into their victims, the ends of their spines impaling the target. The rig's atmosphere acts as a slow poison on these animals and so they may die before the players encounter them.

Worker Robot. These machines are 2.5 meters long and very strong. They are designed to work on the outside of the rig in all but the worst weather conditions. Only one robot is still functional when the players arrive onboard. The robot has two work arms, and a central welding laser. It fly's on null-gravity modules, but at the present time it can only fly as fast as a man can walk. The robot was originally controlled via a radio link, but this has been rendered useless by the Energy Sucker. Its internal controls are malfunctioning and it will attack anything it can see moving. As weapons the workarms count as Blade +1 and the laser as Laser Rifle +1, it skin counts as Cloth -1. It has 35 hit points.

The Scientist, Daniels. The last surviving member of the rig's crew. Daniels has been affected by the disease and looks in a very bad way. When the players reach him he will weakly say "it's... it's a..." and will then fall unconscious.

SYSTEM FAILURE

This table reflects the feeding of the Energy Sucker on the power sources with the rig. As a guide for other pieces of equipment not on the list, large energy sources will fail before smaller ones and sensitive equipment will fail before the more robust. Most equipment will not be damaged, just all the electrical power that was in it will be 'gone'.

SYSTEM FAILURE TABLE

TIME (MINUTES)	EFFECT
5	Docking bay door power fails, the players's Cutter is locked in.
7	Storm hits, all communication is lost with the outside world.
10	Air locks fail. Players cannot open the outer air lock door, except by blowing the emergency explosive bolts.
20 E	Main lighting circuit fails, replaced by red emergency lights, Cutter's power output is reduced by half.
30	Characters feel heavy, due to partial failure of deck grav plates. Internal gravity is now 1.5g. Battle Dress fails.
35	PGMP weapons fail.
40	Vacc suits fail.
45	Main bridge controls fail, and laser rifles and short range communicators are drained.
55 E	Main computer fails, and laser carbines are drained.
65	Hand computers fail, the rig's cooling system stops, slowly increase the internal temperature.
70	Spikeys die, Worker Robot's power fails (see encounters).
75	Laser pistols, and any other energy weapons are drained. All life rafts but one fail.
85	Emergency lighting fails. Internal gravity rises to 2g. Air recycling stops.
95 E	All remaining electronic equipment the players have fails.
105	Power to Iris valves, and lifts fail. Total power failure happens on the Cutter.
110	Grav plates fail, internal gravity is now 3g.
115	Last Life Raft fails.
120	Complete power failure, the rig's drives fail. The rig falls from the sky. Anyone left onboard at this time dies.

TIME = Time after the party arrive onboard in game minutes.

E = Endurance saving throw. Throw under Endurance on 2d6, DMs; First save -2, second save -1, third save no DM. If the character fails a save they have 'caught' the disease.

The failure of the life support systems cooling and air recycling has no real game effect but it can add a great deal of 'atmosphere'.

CAPTAIN STRAKER'S LOG

3rd. Science Officer Daniels has noticed some odd-loking crystalline like creatures through the Observation Blister.

4th. Several of these creatures (Spikeys as Daniels has named them) attacked some crew members on C deck. Security managed to capture and confine them in the Caging Area under my orders. Martens is studying them now. I have Garron, the Chief Engineer, looking into how they got aboard.

5th. Garron reports a major malfunction in the Gas Intakes. This must be where the Spikeys came on board - hence the damage. However, the Engineering Section were able to repair it within five hours.

6th. Garron reports some minor power failures, nothing to worry about, he says.

7th. Surgeon Martens tells me a crew member has died today - from some unknown disease. I have given him all the necessary facilities to examine the Spikeys in depth. It seems likely they are the cause. I have ordered the quarantine of the Sky Rig. New World must not be exposed to the disease. Also puzzling are the continued reports of minor power failures. Afternoon - Martens reports that the Spikey's are slowly dying.

8th. This morning, Garron recommended the closing down of the refinery because of increased unexplained malfunctions, endangering the safety of the crew. The Production Manager objected but I was forced to agree with Garron and ordered the shutting down of the Refinery. Afternoon - the disease is spreading. I have called a general meeting to explain to the crew the importance of not leaving the rig, after Security stopped some people attempting to steal a life raft. A team of specialists have been promised by New World One. They should be here within the week.

9th. Continued mechanical failures. I feel very tired... Garron is gone... Must sleep.

10th. No entry.

11th. (Today's date). No entry.

SURGEON MARTEN'S LOG

4th. Crew well. Riggins' flu improving.

5th. Treated 2 security men for puncture wounds, caused by some alien life forms that have invaded the ship. Have set up small lab in Caging Area to study them. The men look fine - there seem to be no added complications. Keeping them under observation in case of disease / biological reaction.

6th. Spikeys have a definite crystalline structure - extraordinary. They also appear to use helium in respiration. Security patients are improving. Riggins has been discharged.

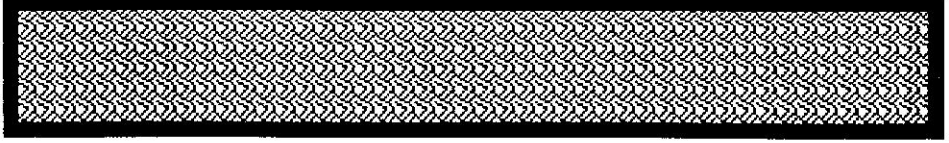
7th. Crewman Williams from Deck C admitted, suffering from extreme exhaustion. Afternoon - he has fallen into a deep sleep.

8th. Crewman Williams fell into a coma and died last night. I still cannot determine cause of death. Two new cases from C Deck admitted. There must be a virus of some kind but I am unable to isolate it. The disease is spreading like wildfire. Sick Bay cannot handle them all, had to confine many to quarters. I am very worried - it is essential to confine the disease to the Rig. Several of the crew have died.

9th. Captain Straker has fallen ill. Afternoon - Captain has died. The plague seems to be acting faster. There are only five of us left now; me Daniels, one of the security men and two other crewmen.

10th. Rogers (Security) has left the Rig in a pressure suit. We tried to stop him, but he shot two of the crew - the stupid, selfish fool; with any luck he won't be picked up. Afternoon - Discovered that the cause of death involves the cessation of neuronic impulses in the central nervous system - as if all a person's nervous energy was drained. However, I am still unable to find any organism causing this. Evening - I think it is too late now. I am feeling drowsy... Where is Daniels?... It is only a matter of hours now.

11th. (Today's date). No entry.



THE SKY-RIG

This Sky Rig is used to test new equipment and processes in working conditions. The equipment being tested now is a device which can extract rare gases from the atmosphere at a fraction of the normal cost. The rig's drives are non-standard anti-grav drives: these can be kept running constantly for many months at a time. The rig had a crew of 23 and 6 non-standard life rafts. These are built around a simple hydrogen ramjet. Each lift raft masses 10 tones and can carry 10 passengers. The flight controls are entirely automatic consisting of just three buttons which activate and launch the raft. The raft uses the gas giant's atmosphere as fuel so once the raft is in orbit it will not be able to maneuver nor restart the jet engine. The life raft will complete three orbits of Skiddir after which time the orbit decays and the raft plummets planetward. On each orbit there is a chance that the life raft will be picked up by a ship answering the raft's distress beacon. This chance is: 15% on Orbit 1, 25% on Orbit 2 and 50% on Orbit 3.

SKY-RIG (High Guard)
SZ-G604622-40000-00000-0 MCr 2,600 TL12 7000 tons
Crew = 19 Passengers = 6 Cargo = 24 EP = 420 Agility = 4

LIFE RAFT (High Guard)
QN-0305110-30000-00000-0 MCr 5 TL12 10 tons
Crew = 0 Passengers = 10

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

Pressure Suit. Unlike a Vacc suit, this is designed to withstand the crushing atmosphere of Skiddir. It is a large armored suit with anti-grav modules built in. The hands and feet of the suit have electromagnets built into the suit, so the operator can 'stick' to the hull of the rig while working outside. A skill of Vacc Suit -2, or Battle Dress -2 is needed to operate the suit. In combat the suit counts as battle dress, but any hit that penetrates the suit will cause a malfunction, all moving parts will jam and no movement will be possible. Anyone shooting a weapon while wearing the suit does so at -3 to hit due to the suit's bulkiness. In normal gravity the suit can fly at a maximum speed of 350 kph.

Life Support Machine. Medical -2 is needed to attach the machine to the patient. A character with Medical -1 can attempt hook up - throw 2d6, 8+ the attempt succeeded. If failed then the patient takes 1d6 damage. These machines are movable but must always be connected to a power supply.

REFEREE NOTES

It is up to the referee to decide exactly what payment the players should receive, but it should be remembered that the Cutter is only on Loan from New World's government, and that the characters will be doing less than one game day's actual work.

The Journey To The Sky-Rig. Only encounter 3 will actually change the time the party arrives on the rig. Any other delay will have no effect. If encounter 6 occurs the players will find it much harder to succeed with the mission. If the spy is found he will seem to be friendly but once onboard the rig he will start giving away false information and may even attempt to sabotage parts of the rig. If the spy is not found then he will sabotage some areas of the rig, aiming to stop the players from finding out just what is going on. The spy will always try to leave without the players by using a life raft. One life raft will always be ready to save the players at the end of the time limit.

On The Sky-Rig. The referee should use the System Failure Table to create tension. Encounters with the lesser inhabitants of the rig are not keyed to any particular location, (except for the Scientist). The referee should let the players encounter them when they least expect it. The worker robot will only be found on C and D Decks, and the Spikeys will be found somewhere on E Deck. The System Failure Table should be kept to, but if the referee wants, he can lengthen or shorten the time slightly if he thinks it will increase the tension of the game. To give an idea of how long things take to do, it takes one minute to quickly search a stateroom and four to five minutes to search it thoroughly. It will take 7 minutes to read one of the logs.

Recovery From The Effects Of The Energy Sucker. All affected equipment must be checked after it has been drained, or after that piece of equipment has left the rig, to see if it has been damaged in any way. Every character that caught the disease must also check at the same time. Throw 2d6. If the result is 2 or 3 then that piece of equipment has been damaged. It will cost

10-60% of its purchase cost to repair. For every affected character do the same except if they throw a 2 or 3 they will permanently lose 1 point of Intelligence and 2 points of Dexterity, due to slight brain damage, caused by the disease.

INTERIOR DETAILS

A Deck, Crew's Quarters

1. Life Raft. One of the two life rafts will contain 3 dead crew members.

2. Lounge. Scattered around this area are low tables and comfortable chairs. The wall between the two life raft hatches is a large viewing screen, at the present showing a recorded quiz show (fortunately, 45 minutes after the party arrive onboard the screen will fail).

3. Captain Straker's Cabin. A double sized stateroom, full of mementos of old commands and the Captain's Log (see Referee's Information section for details). The dead body of the Captain is on the bed.

4. Production Manager's Cabin. A similar area to the Captain's cabin, but is much neater. In one corner is a larger scale model of the Rig.

5. Stateroom. All these staterooms contain various personal items. There will also be 7 dead crew members, all of who have died of the disease. If the players want to waste time they will find 564 Cr in cash, and 1,200 credits' worth of goods.

6. Fresher.

7. Storage Space.

B Deck, Control And Recreation Level.

1. Life Raft.

2. Bridge. A large room filled with control consoles. From here the refinery can be controlled as well as the flight path of the rig itself. The consoles show that the rig is in perfect working order, but will also show parts of the rig that are not working, (no reason should be given by the referee about why things are not working).

3. Computer Room. A computer Mk2 is fitted in this room. An extensive back-up memory has also been installed.

4. Locker. This area contains the usual types of equipment found in all ship's lockers, in a locked rack on one wall are 5 Snub pistols with 15 HE and 30 Tranq rounds.

5. Offices.

6. Library.

7. Kitchen.

7a. Cold Store.

8. Recreation Area. This was the rig's main common room where the crew ate their meals and relaxed. Amongst a pile of broken furniture near the folding doors is the body of one of the rig's crew. The area on the other side of the folding doors was used as a gymnasium.

9. Fresher.

10. Sick Bay. Four life support machines line one wall, all are occupied by crew members affected by the disease. If they are removed from the machines they will die. All four are unconscious. The life support machines will fail after 90 minutes unless another power supply can be found.

10a. Surgery. A small operating theater. On the floor is the body of the rig's surgeon, Martens. His log will be found nearby.

10b. Air Lock. Used to keep infected air out of the operating room.

11. Storage Space.

C Deck, Power Plant And Drives Level

1. Power Plant. In perfect working order, it will continue to run right up to the end. The Energy Sucker is absorbing the power, diverting it away from where it is needed. The Energy Sucker will not be seen even in this area.

2. Drive Rooms. These two areas contain the rig's drive units. They are in perfectly good condition. Two more dead crew members will be found draped over the control panels.

3. Upper Refinery Level. A large amount of heavy machinery occupies this area. a vast mass of pipes lead to the central refinery, the top of which rises through an open area in the middle of the room.

4. Loading Area. Two fork lift trucks stand idle; one is loaded with a large metal valve.

5. Maintenance Access Area. Lying here is the body of a dead mechanic. He was removing an inspection hatch leading to an empty fuel tank. If the players complete the mechanic's job they will find the central parts of the Energy Sucker within. The players will not be able to see the body of the Energy Sucker since it is hidden by the bloated bulk of the Energy Sack. The Energy Sucker will not react to the players unless they attack it, in which case it will draw in 2d6 tentacles each round and defend itself.

6. Maintenance Access Area. As 5, but without the mechanic or the monster.

D Deck, Refinery Level

1. Life Raft.

2. Gas Separation Plant. This machine separates the rare but useful gases out of Skiddir's atmosphere. This is a very large machine, filling most of this room.

3. Air Lock. Inside will be found another dead crew man (Rogers, Security). He is in a pressure suit, and carries a body pistol with a half empty magazine (he shot the crew men in the Lower Refinery).

4. Robotics Control Center. Many control panels line the walls of this room. Each console controlled one of the worker robots. At the present only one console is operating. The controls are not functioning but a TV picture will be seen, this picture is being transmitted by the last worker robot. This picture will show some part of the interior of the rig.

5. Air Locks. These large air locks are designed to launch and retrieve worker robots.

6. Fuel Transfer Equipment. This sealed area contains the machinery necessary to transfer refined fuel from the rig to a waiting tanker.

7. Locker. Storage space for four pressure suits.

8. Cutter Bay. This tube acts as a hangar for Cutters bringing food, and etc. to the rig. The player's Cutter will have to dock here.

9. Cargo Hold. Stacked high with crates containing newly designed machine parts.

10. Workshop. Along one wall are racks for holding the rig's robots, 6 of the 10 racks are occupied with deactivated robots. In the center of the room are heavy duty work benches; a small crane is fixed to the ceiling.

11. Electronics Store. Spare parts for the rig's electrical equipment.

12. Store. Metal sheet, pipes of all shapes and sizes, as well as coils of steel rope are stored in this area.

13. Lower Refinery. This is the base section of area 3 on C Deck. It has a similar mass of pipes and ducts. At the bottom of the stairs are two bodies. Both have been shot.

E Deck, Science Level

1. Probe Launching Area. Small unmanned probes are dropped into the clouds through a small air lock. Wall racks hold 11 unused probes.

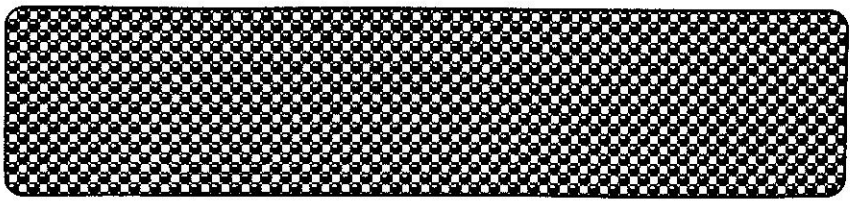
2. Weather Center. Instruments for recording weather patterns.

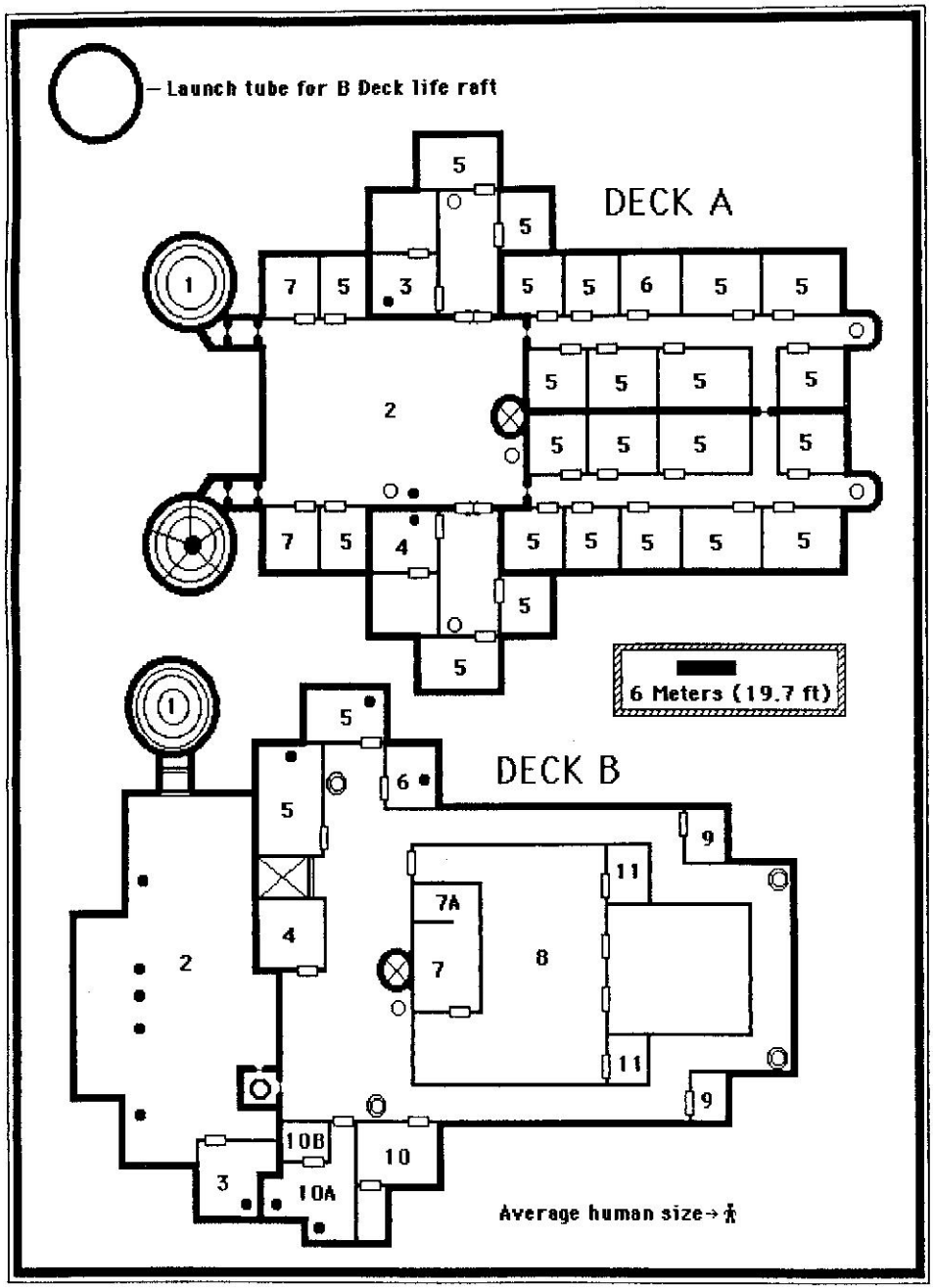
3. Laboratory.

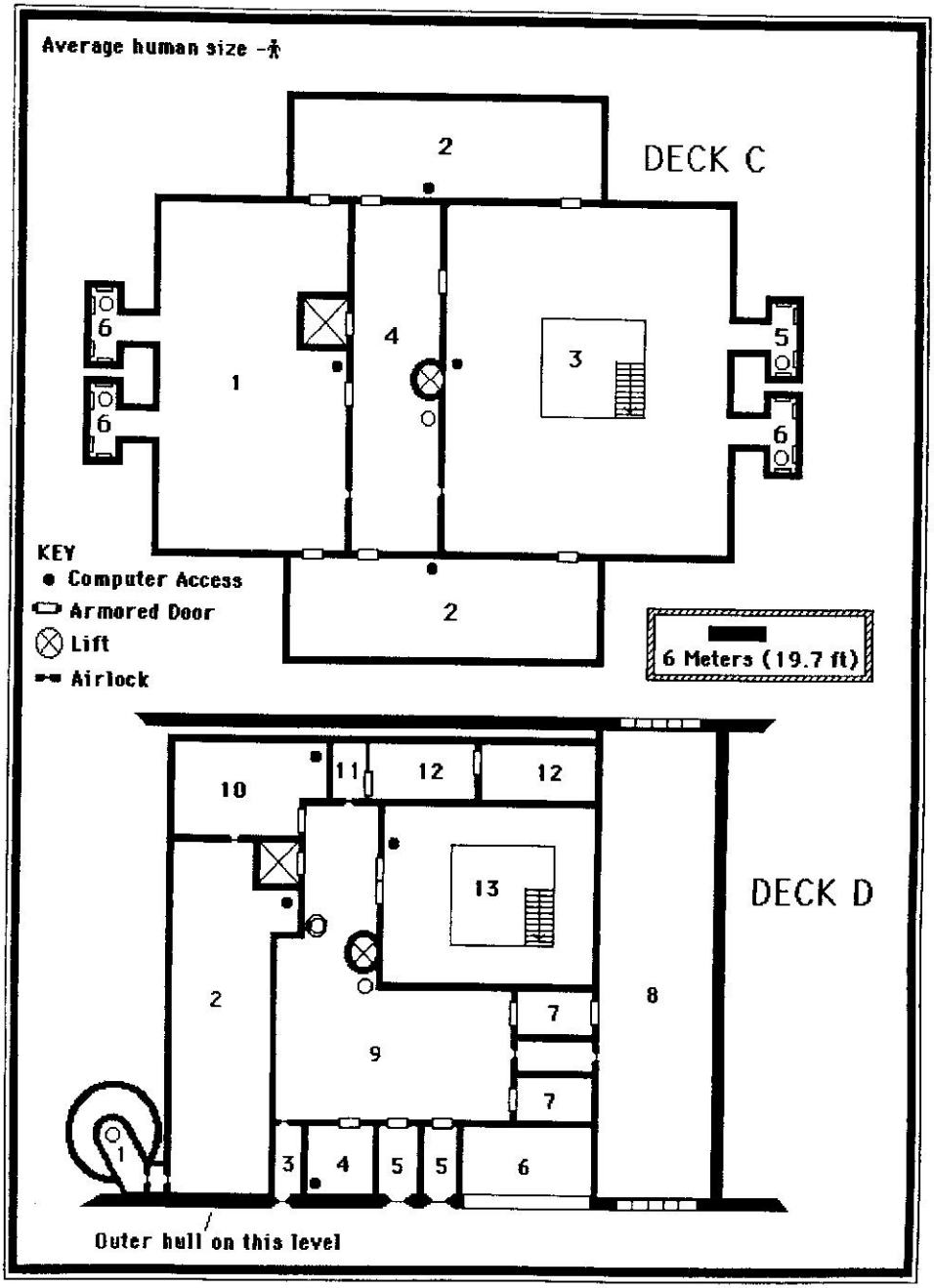
4. Caging Area. The Spikeys were kept here (see encounter section). During the confusion of the last few days they escaped, smashing the glass wall and killing one of the crew. His body remains in the middle of the floor in a pool of cold blood.

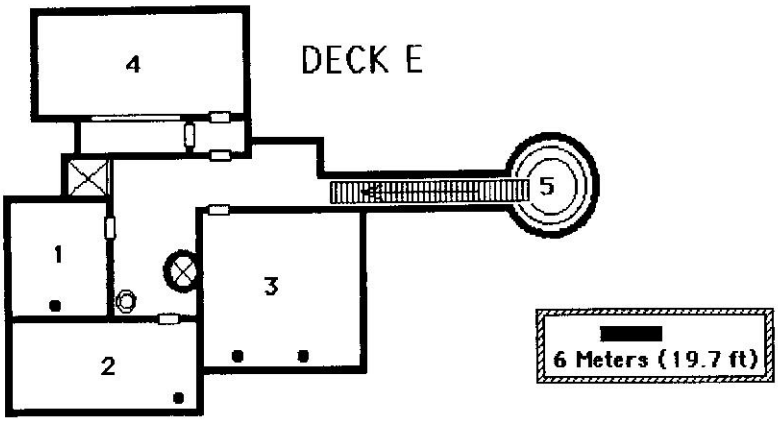
5. Observation Blister. At the end of the flight stairs is an armored glass observation post. This room has the only "windows" on the entire rig, and allows direct observation of cloud formations as well as the underside of the rig. The blister is crammed with all kinds of measuring equipment. It also contains the last surviving crew member Daniels (see encounter section, the Scientist).

(See maps and characters that follow this section). Ω

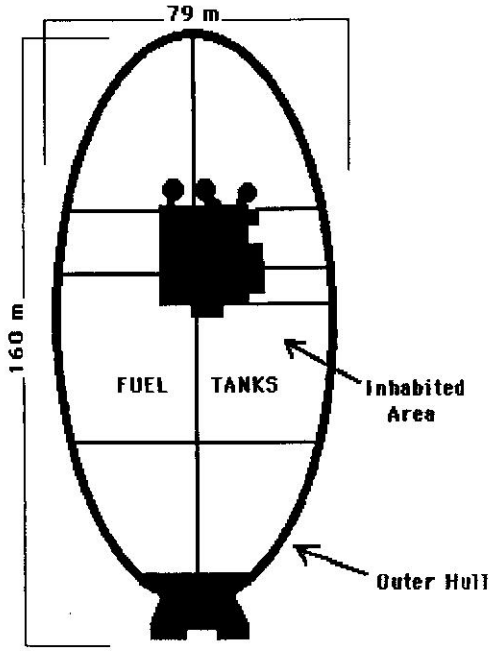



Launch tube for B Deck life raft
DECK A
DECK B
6 Meters (19.7 ft)
Average human size→


Average human size
DECK C
2
1
3
4
5
6
6
6
2
KEY
Computer Access
Armored Door
Lift
Airlock
6 Meters (19.7 ft)
DECK D
10
11
12
12
13
2
9
7
7
8
1
3
4
5
5
6
Outer hull on this level



PLAN VIEW (SECTION) OF SKY-RIG



Average human size→

CHARACTERS

This adventure is designed for a group of six characters. If the Referee wishes more characters can be added.

1. Ex-Marine Force Commander 796A89 Age 34 4 Terms Cr 2000
Leader -2, Forward Observer -2, Tactics -1, Recon -1, Recruiting -2, Pistol -1, Combat Rifle -2, SMG -1

2. Ex-Army Captain, Infantry 885793 Age 30 3 Terms Cr 1000
Demolitions -3, Recon -2, Survival -1, Leader -1 SMG -1, Electronics -1, Recruiting -1, Combat Rifle -2

3. Ex-Army Captain, Cavalry 7B8896 Age 34 4 Terms Cr 500
Recon -2, Instruction -2, Mechanical -1, Tactics -1, Tracked Vehicle -3, Wheeled Vehicle -2 Leader -1, Demolitions -1, LMG -1, HMG -1

4. Retired Navy Starman 9986A7 Age 46 7 Terms Cr 1000
Administration -2, Rifle -2, Computer -2, Medical -2, Ships Boat -1

5. Ex-Merchant Third Officer 687A96 Age 26 2 Terms Cr 4000
Streetwise -2, SMG -1, Navigation -2, Steward -0,

6. Retired Merchant First Officer 598A76 Age 42 6 Terms Cr 60,000
Engineering -3, Pilot -2, Jack-O-Trades -2, Shotgun -2, Mechanical -2,

THE IMPERIA
NEWS SERVICE